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IN REPLY REFER TO

AGDA (M) (6 Aug 70) FOR OT UT 70B029

20 August 1970

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG Melvin Zais, CG, XXIV  
Corps, Period 26 June 1969 to 18 June 1970 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Reference: AR 1-26, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U) dated 4 November 1966.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of LTG Melvin Zais, subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 1-26; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 1-26, as a result of subject report should be provided ACSFOR OT UT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

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*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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**23 JUL 1970**

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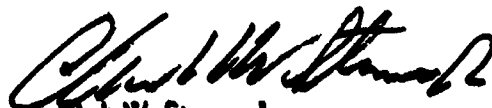
**SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report - LTG Melvin Zais**

**Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
Department of the Army  
Washington, D.C. 20310**

1. Attached are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by LTG Melvin Zais. The report covers the period 26 June 1969 - 18 June 1970, during which time LTG Zais served as Commanding General, XXIV Corps.
2. LTG Zais is recommended as a candidate guest speaker at appropriate service schools and joint colleges.

**FOR THE COMMANDER:**

1 Incl  
2 cys w/d HQ DA

  
Clark W. Stevens Jr.  
Captain AAG  
Assistant Adjutant General

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HEADQUARTERS, XXIV CORPS  
Office of the Commanding General  
APO San Francisco 96349

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SUBJECT: Senior Officer's Debriefing Report (U)

Commanding General  
United States Army, Vietnam  
ATTN: AVHC-DST  
APO San Francisco 96375

1. (U) Reference: USARV Regulation 1-3, Subject: Senior Officer's Debriefing Program.

2. (U) General:

This report is submitted in accordance with Reference 1. In this report I have emphasized the rationale, techniques, problem areas and recommendations concerning my tenure as Commanding General of XXIV Corps. I have purposely omitted details of various operations, since these specifics are available in after action reports, lessons learned and other historical reports. Statistical-type information is limited to that necessary for clarity or to add emphasis.

3. (C) Situation Upon Assumption of Command on 26 June 1969.

I found the transition from Division to Corps Commander a smooth one, since my previous year's experience in command of the 101st Airborne Division provided an intimate knowledge of the terrain, weather and enemy situation in most of the Corps AO. Perhaps of more importance was the associations and rapport I had developed with key ARVN and GVN officials. This proved to be invaluable in developing a close

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working relationship between US and Vietnamese efforts throughout my period of command.

a. Enemy situation.

(1) Organization, Command and Control: The enemy divides NICTZ into two major tactical commands, B-5 Front and Military Region Tri-Thien Hue (MRTTH). B-5 Front extends from about twenty kilometers north of the DMZ south to Route 9 and Cua Viet River. MRTTH extends from Route 9 southward to the Thua Thien-Quang Nam provincial boundary.

(2) Dispositions: In June 1969 there were nine identified infantry regiments (88th, 27th, 31st, 270th, 138th, 246th, 36th, 24th, 7th Front) and one unidentified infantry regiment or its equivalent, supported by three to four artillery regiments (84th minus, 204th, 164th, U/I) and five sapper battalions (126th Naval Sapper, 10th Sapper/7th Front, 11th Sapper Bn/7th Front, 20th Bn/304th Division, 33d Sapper Bn/MR IV) in or within reinforcing distance of Quang Tri Province. (See sketch map I). Six identified infantry regiments, (4th, 5th, 6th, 9th, 29th, 7th Front) and one artillery regiment (675th), two rocket artillery battalions (K-32/5th Regt, K-35/6th Regt), and four sapper battalions plus (Chi Thua Iand II, 12th Sapper/6th Regt, K-3/MRTTH, 1 co/4th Regt), were in or within reinforcing distance of Thua Thien Province. (See sketch maps II and III).

(3) Capabilities: Having suffered heavy losses during the spring and early summer, the enemy avoided contact and withdrew elements into safe havens bordering the Corps AO. Encounters with previously

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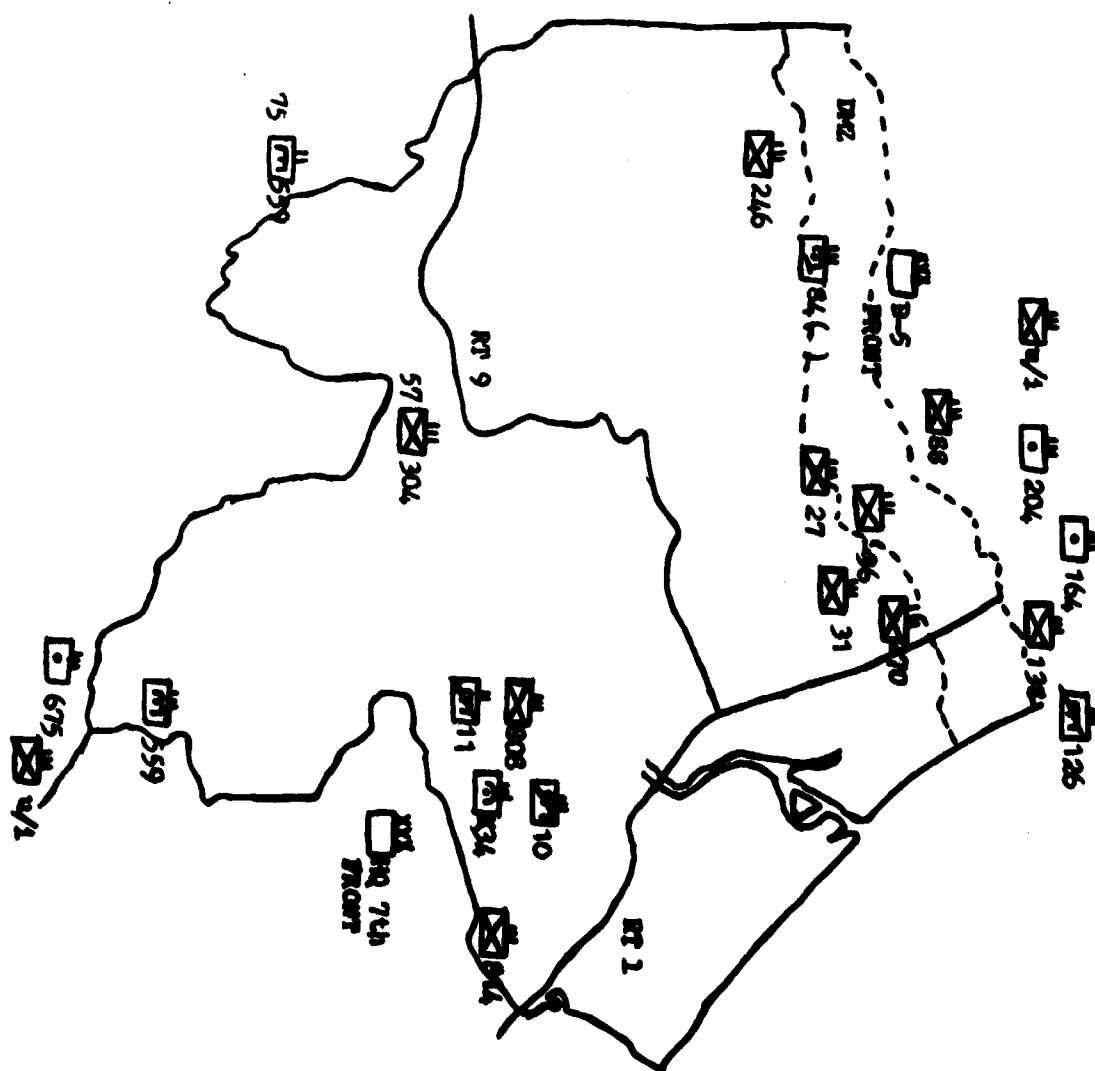
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QUANG TRI  
 ENEMY DISPOSITIONS  
 UPON ASSUMPTION OF  
 COMBAT

Sketch Map I

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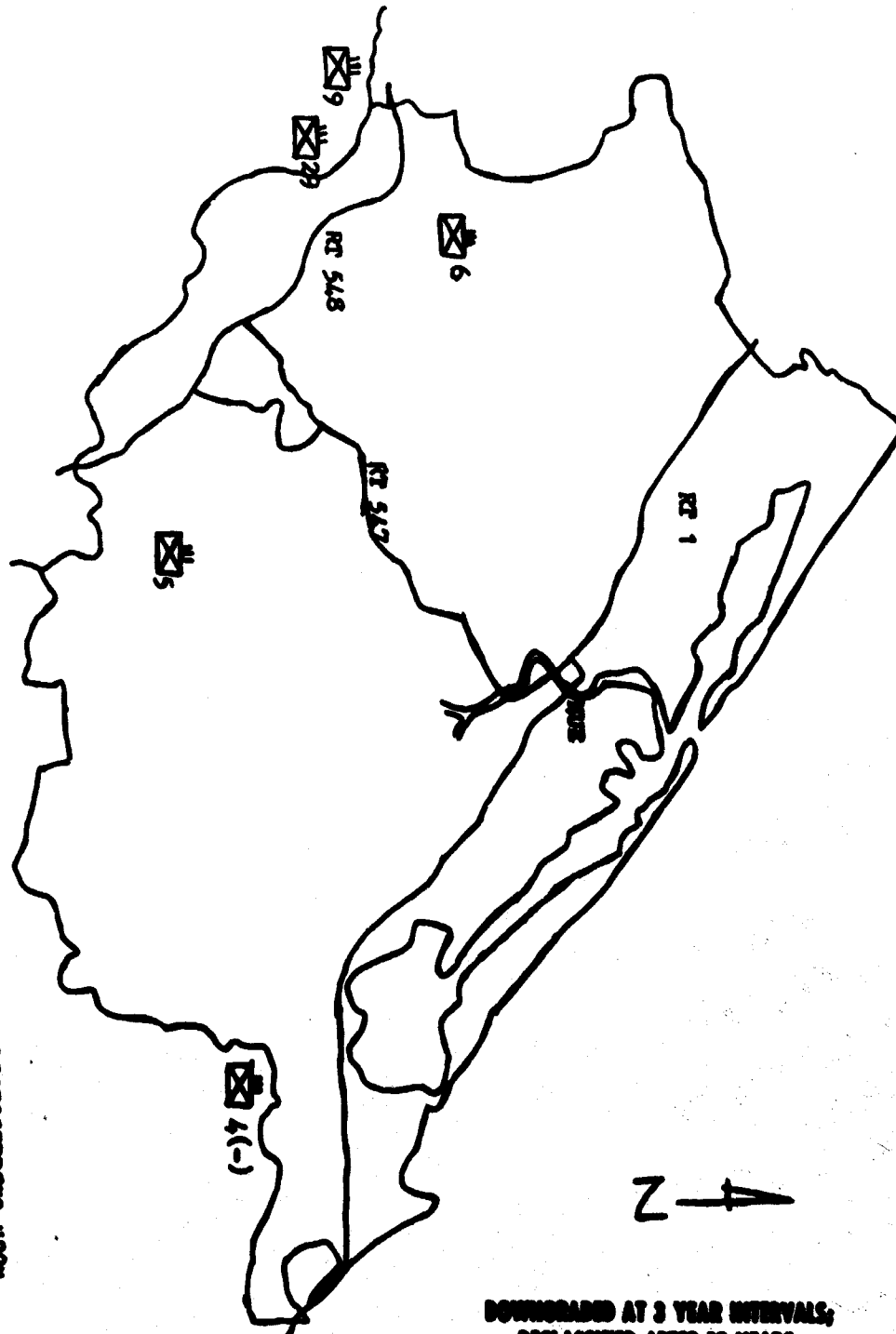
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END OF DISPOSITIONS FROM  
ASSUMPTION OF COMBAT

TRIA TRIA

Sketch Map II

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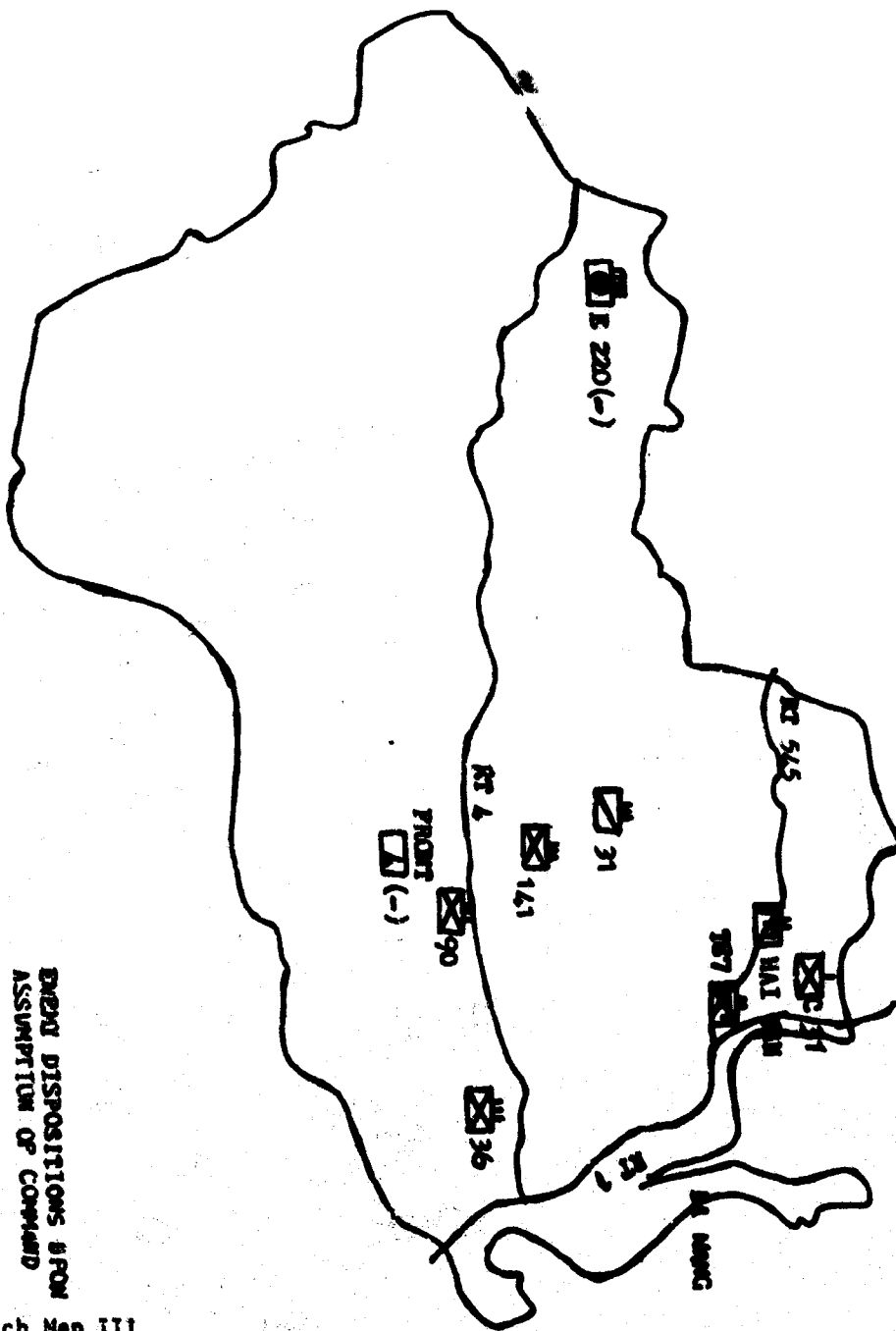
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inactive or newly formed sapper units and evidence of sapper trained replacements joining existing units indicated increased emphasis on sapper attacks. Enemy forces lacked the capabilities for sustained offensive activity and did not show any evidence of positioning attacking forces and supplies for large scale attacks of any kind.

Southwest monsoonal effects on the enemy personnel/logistical/evacuation system in Laos, and continued Allied preemptive operations throughout the Corps interior were degrading enemy offensive capabilities. The enemy did have the capability to renew his attacks-by-fire, mine LOCs, terrorize and harass civilians, and conduct sapper attacks on fire support bases.

b. Friendly situation. Friendly forces in NICTZ in June 1969 were:

- (1) 101st Airborne Division(AM) - Thua Thien Province
- (2) 3d Marine Division - Quang Tri Province. The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division(Mech) was OPCON to the 3d MARDIV.
- (3) 1st ARVN Infantry Division, which contained four regiments and operated in both provinces.
- (4) Marine Combined Action Platoons.
- (5) RF, PF, PSDF and NPFFs.
- (6) Task Force Clearwater (USN<sup>1</sup>), which provided for the protection and coordination of waterborne logistic operations on the Perfume River to Hue and the Cua Viet River to Dong Ha, and conducted riverine operations on these rivers and adjacent waterways.

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c. Mission and concept of operations. The common mission of friendly forces in June 1969 was to destroy NVA and MFVC units west of the piedmont before they could infiltrate east to the populated areas, and to support pacification efforts.

The concept of operations entailed:

(1) Minimum US and ARVN forces (a) operating close to the population trace, (b) overwatching enemy infiltration routes, (c) dealing with the relatively small VCLF, guerilla and MFVC elements in the area and (d) reinforcing Territorial Forces.

(2) Maximum US and ARVN forces operating in the canopy to the west.

(3) Territorial Forces (RF, PF, PSDF and NPFF) protecting the populace, dealing with the VCLF and eliminating the VCI.

#### 4. (C) The effects of Redeployment

a. Shortly after assumption of command of XXIV Corps, I was confronted with the problems related to imminent redeployment of major forces. On 1 July 1969 the withdrawal of the 9th Marine Regimental Landing Team was announced. This was a change to existing plans for the phased drawdown of US forces from Vietnam and required a complete reassessment of the situation in NICTZ. It was logical to assume that the redeployment of the remainder of the 3d Marine Division was near, particularly in view of the encouraging progress that had been made in pacification, the growing capability of the RVNAF and the defeats that the enemy had suffered during the spring and early summer.

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b. Relatively minor adjustments were made in friendly dispositions to accommodate the loss of the 9th RLT. The 3d Marine Division(-), with the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division(Mech) under its operational control, was shifted toward the east in order to assure that adequate forces were disposed along the DMZ. The 1/5 Mech Brigade was moved north into the Con Thien corridor. The boundary between the 101st Airborne Division and the 3d Marine Division was shifted north to compensate for the reduction of forces in Quang Tri Province. CTF Clearwater continued its mission of securing the Cua Viet - Dong Ha and Tan My - Perfume River water lines of communication.

c. Although it was likely that Phase II redeployments would include the 3d Marine Division, I felt that it was necessary to examine the various alternatives should other forces be designated for withdrawal. Consequently, I initiated a formal commander's estimate of the situation, dealing with the various combination of units that might be available during the coming Fall-Winter campaign. Within the framework of these alternatives, I examined various courses of action for the employment of my forces.

d. There were several considerations which tempered my decision. The first was weather. The oncoming winter monsoon would hamper air operations in the mountainous regions of the AO and would restrict the cross-country mobility of my mechanized forces. With fewer forces available, I reasoned that it would be difficult to maintain ground LOCs and simultaneously keep adequate forces in reserve. Also, with a

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reduction in forces by one-third, it would not be possible to occupy as much terrain as before. I analyzed the enemy's capability and concluded that he could do more damage by attacking the populated areas than by engaging US and ARVN regular forces. This would have the disastrous effect of destroying the faith of the people in the ability of GVN/US forces to protect them and negating the splendid progress in pacification made since Tet '68. My reasoning was further influenced by the capability demonstrated by the 1st ARVN Division to account well of itself against major NVA Forces, when provided adequate US combat support. Regional and Popular Forces had also proven themselves increasingly capable of coping with the VC local forces and providing local protection for the population.

e. After frequent consultation and exchange of opinion with MG Truong, CG of the 1st ARVN Division, an overall modus operandi was agreed upon, which would be followed, regardless of which US units were redeployed.

f. I made the decision, in coordination with MG Truong, that US and ARVN forces would be shifted toward the east and employed along the central and eastern DMZ and the edge of the jungle canopy so as to provide a protective shield to the population in the coastal lowlands. The bulk of the US/ARVN forces were to be moved out of the lowlands, leaving the security of the populated areas largely to the territorial and paramilitary forces. At the same time sufficient US/ARVN forces were to be retained in the lowlands to provide a reaction capability

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to deal with any enemy forces that might manage to slip through our protective screen. Increased effort was devoted to upgrading the capability of territorial forces and supporting the pacification program. Since friendly forces were to be withdrawn from the western portions of the Corps AO, I designated these areas as a Corps Reconnaissance Zone. Reconnaissance, surveillance and air cavalry assets would be employed there to acquire targets for long-range artillery, tactical air and B-52's in order to prevent the enemy from reestablishing himself.

g. On 17 September 1969 the redeployment of the remainder of the 3d Marine Division and several artillery and combat service support units was announced. Because of the prior planning that had been made as a result of the commander's estimate, these redeployments and the repositioning of forces were accomplished smoothly and with no disruption of operations. My responsibility as Corps Commander was to disengage and relieve the redeploying units and provide security for their withdrawal. Once units were in a standdown posture, operational control was passed to the component commander - III MAF, or USARV. At the time of the announcement, the 3d Marine Division was engaged in combat from Cam Lo to the Eastern DMZ. I deployed a brigade of the 101st Airborne Division to the central DMZ to screen the withdrawal of the 3d and 4th Marine Regiments, while an ARVN Regiment assumed responsibility for portions of the DMZ to the east. Withdrawal of the 3d Marine Division commenced the day following the announcement, and the entire

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division was redeployed by 5 December. Operational control of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division(Mech) passed to XXIV Corps on 22 October. In the meantime the remainder of the 101st Airborne and 1st ARVN Divisions moved eastward and was disposed on the canopy edge by 15 October.

### 5. (C) The Winter - Spring Campaign.

The period October 1969 through March 1970 was characterized by intensive patrol and ambush activity to deny the enemy access to the population, and by limited offensive operations to thwart enemy efforts to build-up for attacks, particularly during Tet. This use of forces permitted an intensified effort to accelerate the pacification program in Thua Thien and Quang Tri Provinces. Some of the more significant activities during this period are described below:

#### a. Tactical LOC.

I realized that as US Forces were withdrawn from NICTZ there would be less air movement capability for ARVN use. Thus, I developed a program that would maintain tactical flexibility for the ARVN though its reliance on US airmobile assets would have to be less. The program consisted of three related projects: The selection of fire support bases from which ARVN forces could defend the populated areas; the initiation of selected land clearing projects to enhance the defensibility of the fire support bases and eliminate concealed infiltration routes into populated areas; and the construction and upgrading of access roads to the FSB's connected by a secondary tactical line of

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communications in the piedmont paralleling QL-1 (QL-1 is the primary north-south route along the coastal plain running the length of ICTZ). The primary purpose was to enable ARVN forces to establish and maintain forces well to the west of the population trace and to permit rapid repositioning of forces without relying on US helicopters. This program had the additional benefit of opening considerable area for future resettlement and improving land routes of communication for civilian traffic. Although considerable funds and resources were required, the long-term benefits to be gained were well worth the expenditure. The program is continuing and is progressing well. The target completion date is FY 73.

b. Role of US Tactical Units in Pacification.

Long before the term Vietnamization appeared, US units in XXIV Corps were engaged in upgrading the capability of the RF, PF, PSDF and other paramilitary organizations. During the winter campaign, increased emphasis was placed on this vital mission. My task as Corps Commander was to insure that each subordinate command was striving for the proper goal and was participating in their own way toward assisting the Territorial Forces. I did not dictate the manner that this was to be carried out, since each command was confronted with its own unique situation. Consequently, there evolved several different techniques for accomplishing the same mission - each tailored to a specific unit's situation and capability.

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(1) The 101st Airborne Division developed a program for upgrading Territorial Forces that is still in progress. It included the employment of "dedicated" battalions and mobile training teams. A battalion is committed to a selected district on a long-term basis. The battalion CP is collocated with the district headquarters to facilitate coordination and the exchange of intelligence. The battalion, in coordination with the district chief, conducts combined operations with Regional and Popular Forces against the VC/VCI in the district. Training initially is of the on-the-job type. As the situation improves, more training is given, which is specifically tailored to the needs of the units. US/Vietnamese units are closely integrated and the required aviation, artillery and medical evacuation support are provided. A system of rotation is employed, whereby, once an RF company or PF platoon has attained a reasonable degree of proficiency, a new unit is "adopted". In those districts where US units are not habitually employed, each brigade has organized three mobile training teams (MTT). These eight-man teams, in coordination with the district chiefs and US advisors, provide training specifically shaped to correct the weaknesses of the unit being trained. They also assist the RD Cadre in training the PSDF. The effectiveness of this program can be measured by the reliance that is placed on the PF and PSDF to secure the hamlets and LOCs. The Regional Forces are now operating, often independently, in the piedmont area. This releases ARVN and US forces to operate against NVA main forces in the western part of the AO. A corollary of the dedicated battalion concept is the "saturation" concept.

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Here a battalion targets against a specific portion of a district. Extensive use is made of the "soft cordon" to uproot the VCI in selected hamlets. Patience is the keyword. The battalion and the territorial forces with which it operates must remain in a given area for an extended period of time - several months - in order to search and re-search every inch of the terrain. This technique was extremely successful in breaking up the infrastructure in Phu Thu District of Thua Thien.

(2) The situation with the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) was different. Because of its DMZ commitment and lack of available forces, a different technique was required. The Brigade established an RF/PF Leadership School which is still in being. The goals of this school are to instill confidence in RF/PF leaders, to develop tactical skills and to bolster the confidence of the populace in their local defenders. Students are selected by the district chiefs, on a competitive basis. The faculty consists of carefully selected, combat experienced instructors, most of whom have a working knowledge of the Vietnamese language. The students of this school have been highly motivated, and significant improvement has been noted in their performance. In addition to the RF/PF Leadership School, the Brigade conducts small unit combined operations.

(3) The Employment of USMC Combined Action Platoons (CAP) in XXIV Corps was another highly effective approach to the upgrading of the Popular Forces. My comments are restricted to significant highlights

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of this program since the details are well documented in other publications. One of the primary reasons for the success of the CAP program is the careful selection, screening and training of Marines assigned to the organization. All personnel are closely screened to eliminate misfits and those lacking the motivation and maturity required. The results produced by the CAP's is greatly enhancing hamlet security and improving the capability of their counterpart PF platoons, where employed. My only reservation about the CAP Program concerns its relative cost in terms of manpower. The ratio of US to PF of about 1:2 mitigates against expansion of the program.

(4) In Central and Southern I Corps, the 1st Marine and Americal Divisions implemented the Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP). The basic concept is to divide an infantry company into platoon or squad size elements and combine each of these units with a PF platoon to work in a targeted hamlet. The missions assigned to a CUPP platoon are to eliminate the Viet Cong Infrastructure, provide security in the hamlets, protect friendly installations and lines of communications, conduct various civic action programs, and train the PF and PSDF in basic military skills. Training of CUPP personnel is conducted in coordination with the USMC Combined Action Force, (CAF). Selected Officers and key NCO's attend a two-week school, as well as undergo on-the-job training with a CAP team for a ten-day period.

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(5) Although techniques and organization vary among the various commands, securing the people and improving their lot in life is the common denominator. This, I feel, is the key to success in working ourselves out of a job in I Corps.

c. A psychological campaign - "The High Price of Rice".

Early in the year it had become evident that the enemy's food supplies were pitifully low. By late summer 1969 the situation was critical. Allied operations in western Thua Thien and Quang Tri during March, April and May had resulted in over 800 tons of enemy rice being captured or enough to feed 3,200 NVA troops for a year. Instead of 1.4 pounds of rice a day, a NVA soldier in NICFZ was now lucky to receive 3/4 of a pound a day.

Once the fall harvest began, units of MRITH concentrated almost exclusively on attempts to secure the much needed rice. Continued Allied ambushes in the lowlands and along the edge of the piedmont extracted a heavy toll of casualties among rice collection parties. PWs, ralliers and documents from MRITH elements disclosed severe food shortages and fear of participating in rice collection missions due to Allied ambushes.

In October, "The High Price of Rice" campaign was initiated by Allied Forces in order to further deny rice to enemy forces. In his attempts to purchase rice in the lowlands, the enemy was confronted by US, ARVN, RF, PF, PSDF and NFFF troops at every turn. In one hamlet three tons of rice were discovered stored in large jars, drums and

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sandbags. The enemy had skillfully disguised the rice-filled sandbags by using them for bunker construction. During the months of October, November and December, 21,000 pounds of rice were recovered. This campaign featured messages by radio, leaflets, TV, aerial broadcast, and newspapers in order to keep the local citizens informed on the campaign progress, and keep them conscious of their role in denying the enemy food. The high price of rice was equated to the price the enemy was paying in suffering, hardship and loss of life. A broad base of participation was established by employing both US and Vietnamese PSYOP sources to conduct the campaign. Over 15 million leaflets and 100 hours of aerial and ground broadcast were employed. While the rice recovered and captured was a tremendous blow to the enemy, the real significance of the campaign lies in the fact that it was a joint US/GVN campaign which brought the population into the business of denying food to the enemy - the ultimate solution. The momentum gained during the campaign continued into 1970 with even greater successes.

### 6. Assumption of responsibility for entire ICTZ.

With the change of command ceremony on 9 March 1970, XXIV Corps assumed responsibility for the entire ICTZ from III MAF. Three additional provinces, Quang Nam, Quang Tin and Quang Ngai, were now in the XXIV Corps AO.

a. Enemy situation. The enemy forces in the southern three provinces of ICTZ are under Military Region 5 (MR-5) and extend into II

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CTZ. (See sketch maps IV, V, VI). MR-5 is further divided into three subcommands which are Front 4, and the 2d and 3d NVA Infantry Divisions. Front 4 generally controls all NVA, Main Forces and Local Forces in Quang Nam Province.

The 2d NVA Division normally operates in Quang Tin and Northern Quang Ngai Province, controlling its three organic infantry regiments. The Quang Nam Provincial Unit, also subordinate to MR-5, controls the Local Force units operating in Quang Tin Province.

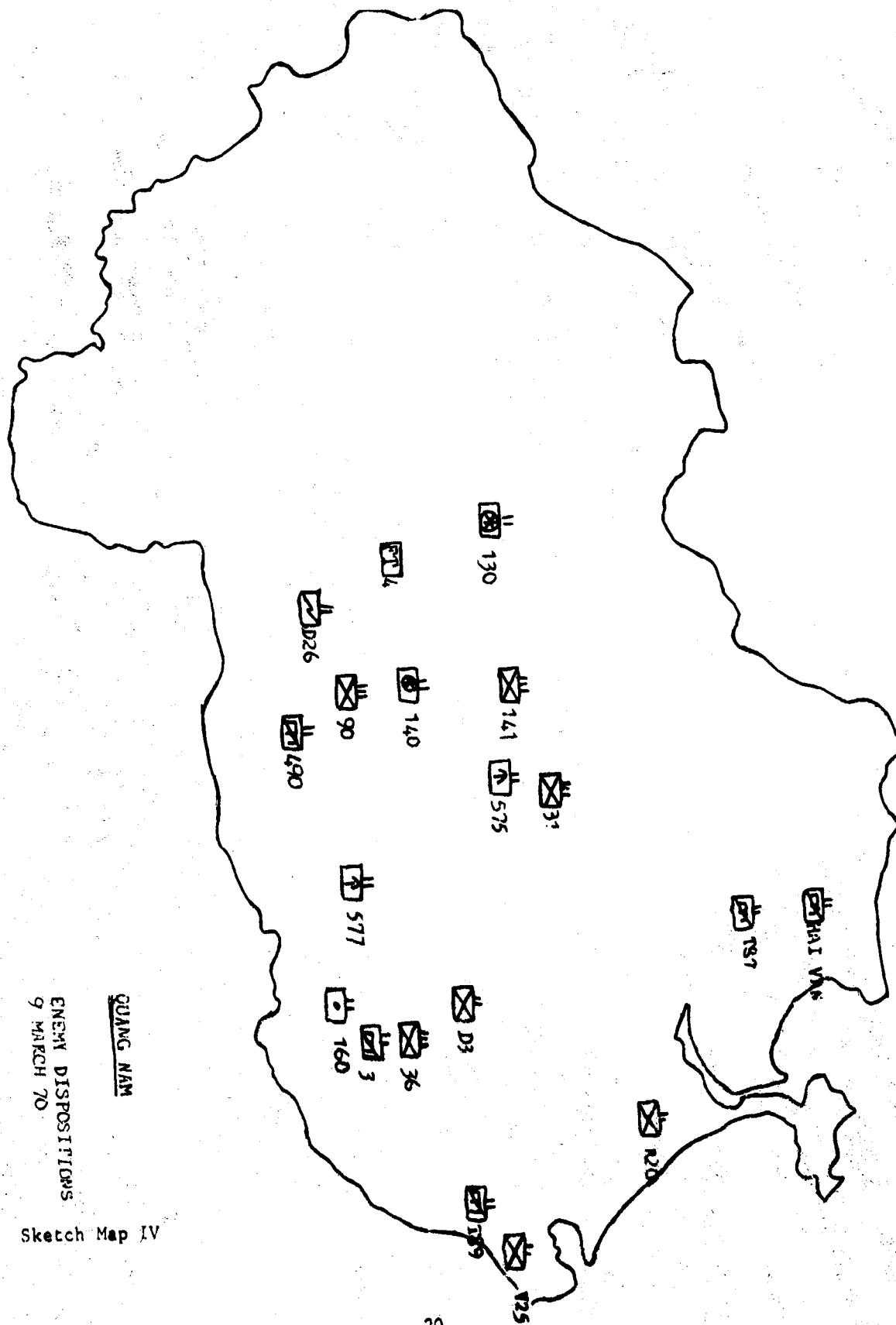
The 3d NVA Division previously operated in southern Quang Ngai Province but moved south into II Corps, leaving behind the Quang Ngai Provincial Unit in control of the Local Force units in Quang Ngai Province.

(1) The Main Force and VC units in CICTZ and SICTZ still pose a major problem. This is an area where the enemy has not been quite as effectively separated from his source of survival, the people, as he has been in the northern provinces. Contributing to the difficulty of the situation in pacification and security of central and southern ICTZ is the fact that it is here that the VC have the deepest roots. This area is the birthplace of the communist parties in Vietnam.

(2) The VCI neutralization program has caused significant losses in enemy trained, specialized personnel. This has forced the VC to rely upon replacement personnel of lesser caliber and experience. In addition, particularly in the southern provinces, many of the long-standing enemy units have been reduced in size. While this may have

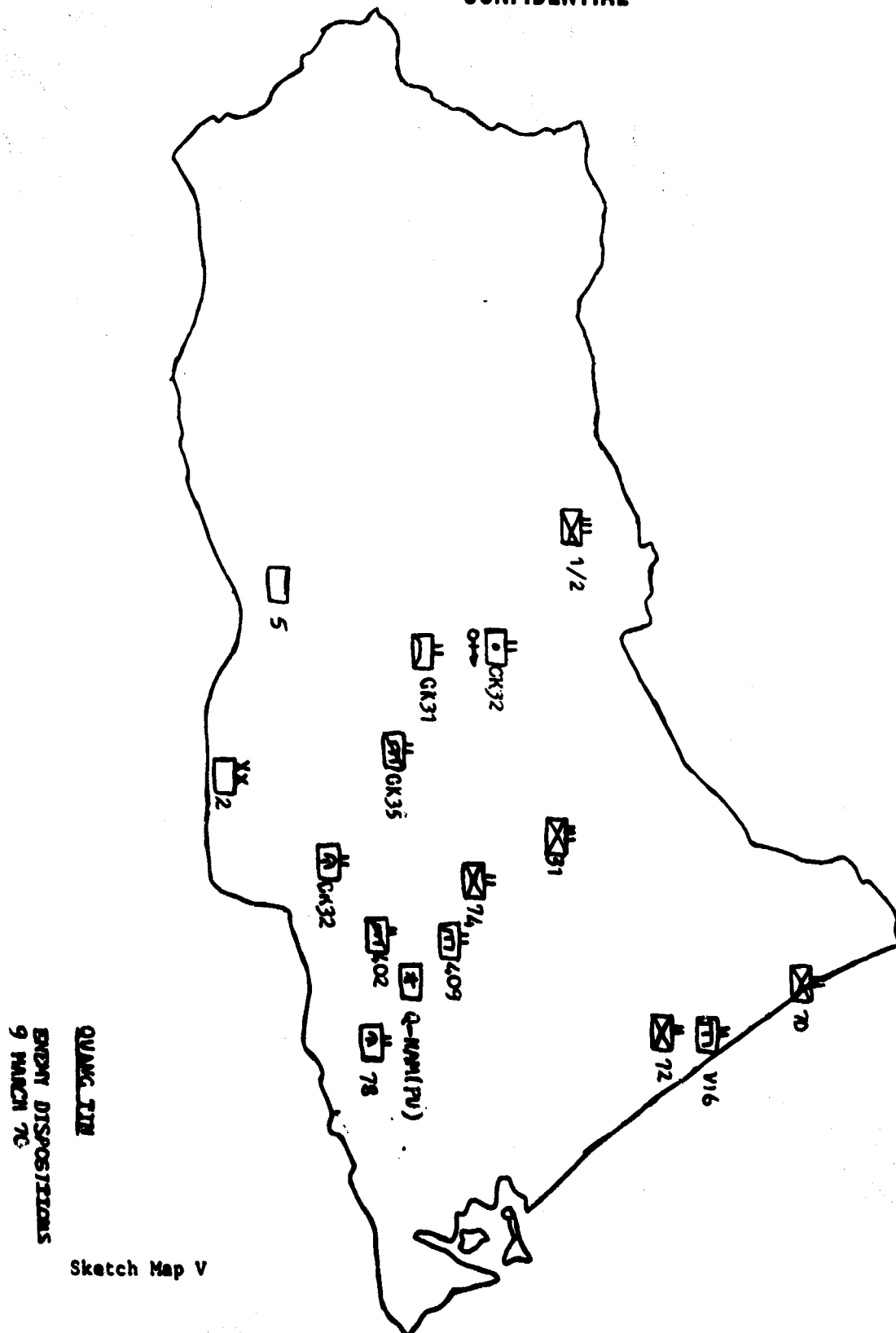


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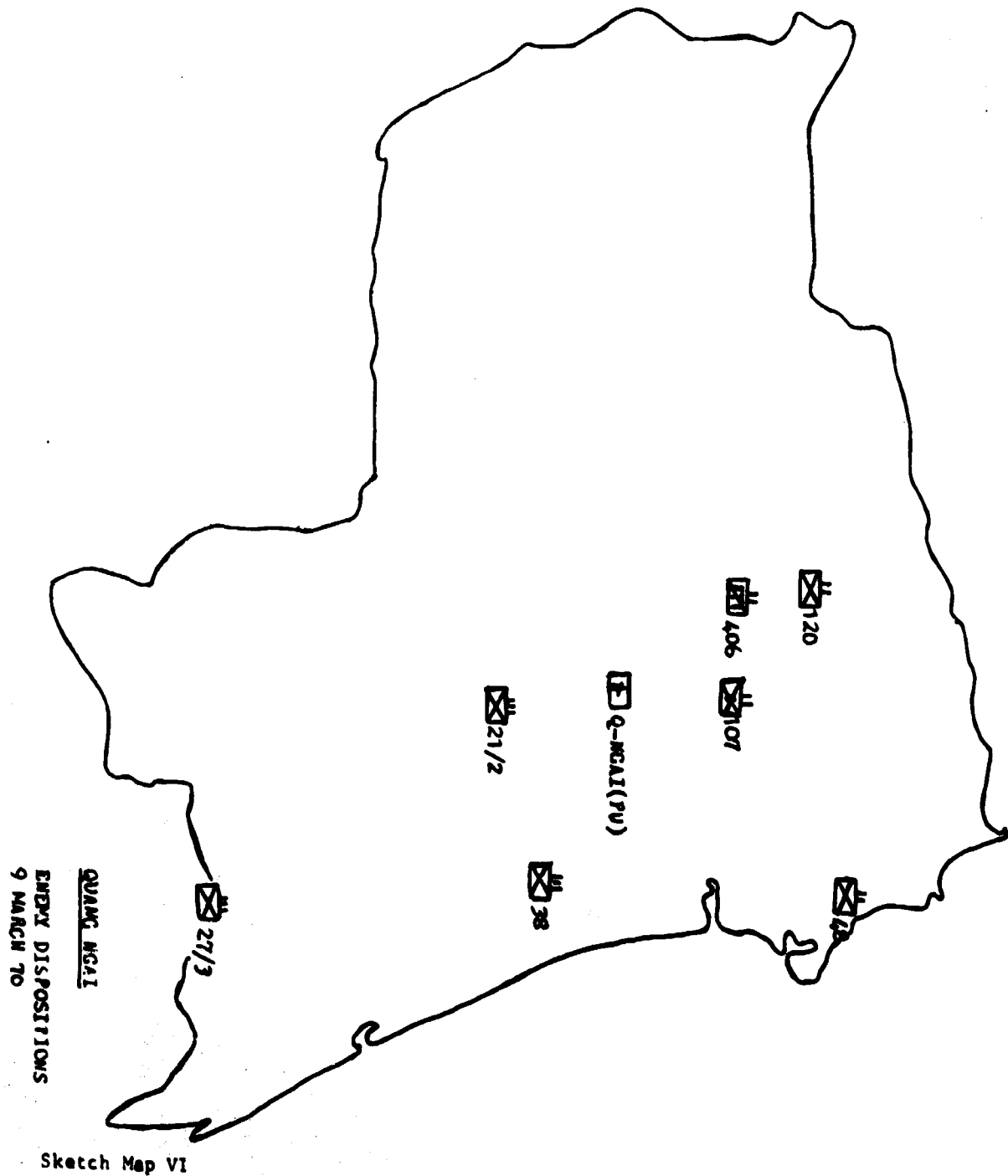
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resulted primarily from friendly combat activities, a great many NVA forces have been assigned to main force and local VC forces because the enemy is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit locally to fill understrength units.

b. Friendly situation.

(1) Quang Nam Province (Central ICTZ)

The ARVN 1st Armored Brigade, 51st Regiment(ARVN) and 1st Ranger Group(ARVN) conduct operations with the 1st MARDIV and the 2d ROKMC Brigade through eastern Quang Nam Province. They emphasize defense of the populated areas and pacification operations.

Two CIDG elements, one at Thung Duc and the other at Nong Son, and CAP teams play an active role in the overall defense of Central I Corps.

The 1st Marine Air Wing provides helicopter support for the 1st MARDIV and the ROK Marines. It also provides a major portion of the fixed wing support for all units in I Corps.

The western portion of Quang Nam Province is designated as the 1st Marine Division Reconnaissance Zone. Surveillance over this area is performed by air from the 1st Marine Air Wing, LRRP's from the Reconnaissance Bn and Force Reconnaissance Company of III MAF, and by sensor strings.

(2) Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces:

In the southern two provinces, the Americal Division and the 2d ARVN Division, operate in a common AO. The concept of operations is very similar to that in Northern and Central I Corps except that frequent combat operations are conducted in the coastal plains by all

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elements. Primary emphasis is placed on security, protection, and resources denial operations in the populated lowlands. Territorial forces provide the majority of the local security in the populated areas. At present, elements of the 196th Brigade and 5th ARVN Regiment share a common AO to conduct a series of search, clear and RIF operations west of the populated area.

In the middle, the 198th Brigade with elements of the 6th ARVN Regiment are operating in a series of search and clear operations in the piedmont area, while elements of the 6th ARVN Regiment with RF's conduct combined operations in support of pacification.

In the south, the 11th Brigade and the 4th ARVN Regiment occupy a common AO.

The CIDG elements located in six areas in Southern I Corps - namely Thien Phouc, Tra Bong, Ha Thanh, Minh Long, Ba To and Gia Vuc - remain operating generally west of the piedmont.

c. In addition to assuming responsibility for three additional provinces on 9 March, I also assumed the duty as Senior Advisor to the CG, Vietnamese ICTZ and responsibility for CORDS.

d. Movement of Corps Headquarters to Da Nang.

The movement of the Corps Headquarters from Phu Bai Combat Base south to Da Nang was the first physical relocation of a Corps headquarters in Vietnam. Planning was initiated early in January with a planning and coordinating group being dispatched to Da Nang in early February. This group included members from each staff element and worked with III MAF personnel during this period to insure a smooth

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transition. The cooperation and support of III MAF personnel was indispensable to the success of this move.

e. In order to insure successful assumption of III MAF responsibilities and functions, certain personnel formerly assigned to III MAF staff sections were assigned to XXIV Corps as an augmentation force. These personnel, both Army and Marine, have proved highly effective in helping the Corps staff to function properly in its new responsibilities.

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7. (C) Prospects of further redeployments:

a. MACV Plan 186-69, published during the later part of 1969, outlined the forces that we would have available for the next year to a year and a half and the priority of tasks for these forces. This was the first basis of long range planning for where we would reposition our forces once further redeployment started.

b. RVNAF Improvement and Modernization.

Keeping in mind that our resources are limited by manpower ceilings, we have strived to gear our planning so that the resources at hand could be fully utilized. Our planning is oriented toward building up the weak areas. We know that in the present situation GVN forces can be depended upon to immediately take up some of the slack resulting from redeployments.

For the near future the largest number of forces will be redeployed from Quang Nam Province. It is in this area that there is less of a GVN cohesive force. With the 1st Division in NICTZ and the 2d Division in SICTZ, there is only 1 ARVN regiment, the 51st, in Quang Nam Province along with Armor, Cavalry and Ranger forces. Our efforts are directed toward forming a cohesive force in this province. It is important that this force be active as soon as possible in order to benefit from the experience of working with the Marines and gaining from their experience and support. We are seeking another regiment or equivalent-size unit to work with the 51st Regiment and the other ARVN forces, with Quang Da Special Zone as the tactical headquarters.

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In order to operate to the west where there is a build-up of NVA forces, the 1st ARVN Division must have continued US aviation, artillery, and combat logistical support. Access to the western areas cannot be gained by road at the present time, but completion of the tactical LOC will greatly enhance the capability to work in those areas with less US support.

We know that GVN forces cannot take over combat operations of the entire ICTZ all at once. We are gearing our planning so that the Transitional Support Force (TSF) will provide for the shortfall in ARVN capability until the ARVN have further improved their capabilities.

c. Commander's estimate on concept of operation for the remaining three phases of redeployment.

Our concept is to maintain a balanced US presence throughout all of ICTZ. US forces will change from an offensive to a predominantly security role and one of support for the ARVN. We are working toward ARVN assuming the full burden of offensive combat operations, while US forces assist and support.

### 8. (C) Assessment of Present Situation:

a. Present threat in NICTZ must be reduced.

Despite his shift away from the big war concept, the enemy is currently building up three major threat areas in the Corps AO. All three areas are in the northern two provinces. The first is in the area of the central DMZ, the second is eastward across the Vietnamese and Laotian Salients to former Base Area 101, and the third, and by far the largest, is eastward from Base Area 011 across the northern A Shau Valley to



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former Base Area 114. This build-up may be either a show of force or the enemy's effort to work his way as close as possible to the lowlands, where he hopes to rebuild his VCI and the strength of his depleted VC Local Force units. Also, we cannot discount the fact that he may be planning a large scale offensive in the northern Corps AO.

During the summer, Allied forces drive to the west to engage the enemy, inflict casualties and destroy base areas. During the winter our forces return to the lowlands because of poor weather and restrictions on mobility. This threat from the west must be reduced now in order to allow the GVN additional time to build up their territorial forces. These forces must assume full responsibility for the lowlands, so that the ARVN can engage the NVA in the western areas.

b. The large build-up of NVA forces north of the DMZ must be discouraged from launching an offensive across the DMZ. Because these forces are in a sanctuary-like situation, they are free to build up and organize their forces, and wait for a US withdrawal or for the right moment to strike. Adequate forces must be available to defeat or deter such a move.

c. A dramatic change is needed in SICTZ to reduce the VC influence and separate the NVA from guerilla forces. The population in the southern provinces has never had any real tendency to support the government. A massive infusion of support, roads, schools, and medical facilities is needed. The people must be provided means for making a decent living. Their life must be made better and they have to be shown that their government cares for them and is helping them. At the same time, this aid must

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be accompanied by a strong military effort directed at the NVA and base areas to the west which have been providing support to the VC units in the populated areas. This is an undertaking which can't be accomplished overnight, especially due to the deep-seated VC ties in the area. It will be a long, hard struggle, requiring abundant US aid in order to accomplish the desired objectives.

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9. (C) Comments/Observations

a. Attitudes toward Vietnamese.

Throughout my tour I have enjoyed a close personal relationship with Vietnamese leaders. I have dedicated myself to maintaining good rapport with the Vietnamese and have strived to instill this goal in the US leaders at all levels. I have leaned over backward to listen to their advice. I have never concerned myself with the semantics of command, or OPCON, or attachment. I tried to make the relationship easy and comfortable. I tried to assure them of support during critical times. They had to know that we would provide helicopters when necessary for logistical support and for medical evacuation. They had to know that we would help them with construction material the same as our own troops. It was imperative that they know that artillery support and gunships and close air support would be just as responsive to their needs as it was to ours. As time passed, by demonstrated performance, there was no longer the need for oral assurances. Because of this type of support, the ARVN grew more and more aggressive and proud of their role. We were unstinting in praise, recognizing that "bad mouthing" leads down the dark tunnel of dismal failure and that a kind word of encouragement can lift an individual or a unit to unbelievable levels of achievement.

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I think that in I Corps we have established a pattern of human relationships unparalleled in the history of warfare in our country. The Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, ARVN, ROK Marines and CORDS elements, a conglomerate of thousands of people trying to get their jobs done, have all been able to mesh together. Such expressions as "gooks", "dinks" and "slopes" are very offensive to the Vietnamese and I have tried to impress upon everyone to be aware of this and to stress it down to battalion and company level.

b. The proper perspective for measuring performance.

I have not judged overall performance and progress by body count and have continually stressed this point to my commanders. Not being anxious to have a high body count at the expense of integrity, I would rather undercount than overcount and be proud of the validity of my statistics. My yardsticks for measuring progress have been security, serenity, economic improvement, political improvement and the capabilities of the ARVN, RF, PF, PSDP and National Police. I think that the body count is a necessary measuring device in military operations, but it isn't the whole answer and, even if it were, it would still be essential to have integrity in the count.

I insisted that we determine from the people what they wanted at the grass-roots level and that we process through district and on to province, and that we not go flopping around looking for publicity and credit, but only endeavor to help where and when it was needed. I did

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not encourage big signs saying "Constructed by ..." or "Contributed by ..." such and such a unit. Good deeds speak for themselves!

c. Capabilities of ARVN/RF/PF/PSDF.

From the very start we have endeavored to help these forces, especially the RF and PF. We understood the differences in their origins, culture, and background and we did not try to shape them in our image. We only tried to help them perform, stressing those virtues which they possessed, rather than searching for differences which many others have interpreted as weaknesses -- erroneously so.

My policy has been to encourage the employment of ARVN troops in the combat role to the maximum with the US giving all out support; in artillery, medical, communications, tactical air, gunships, and all the things which help to make the ARVN cohesive. The RF troops have improved to the point that some of their units are operating in the piedmont area while the PF operate in the populated area.

Although the GVN Forces in the southern three provinces are not equal to those of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, they are moving ahead and continue to make progress. It will take much encouragement, support and close cooperation from US Forces, but I have no doubt as to the capability of the GVN Forces in the south to reach the level of combat effectiveness of the 1st ARVN Division.

d. Small unit leadership.

Due to the constant turnover of personnel, it is imperative that all commands have a continuing program for the indoctrination of junior officers who will lead a platoon or command a company in

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combat for the first time. Too often, young officers and NCOs will be faced with problems in combat where the lack of this training will cost lives and the loss of valuable equipment in addition to contributing to the failure of a mission.

I have recommended for reading and study by each junior leader, whether he be officer or NCO, an excellent article in the January - February 70 edition of Infantry Magazine, "For the Junior Leader: How to Command in Vietnam", by Colonel John H. Hoefling. This very fine article was written by a former commander of the 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, who speaks with the voice of experience.

A special problem lies in the fact that officers come to Vietnam trained in our school system, prepared to fight, eager to demonstrate their aggressiveness, eager to prove that they are fighters. These officers know that this is their big chance. They look to the scoreboards which traditionally have been used to measure military success, and they hunger for body count and prisoners, and resultant publicity and recognition. All of this is understandable, and all of it is essential; but it must be controlled and motivated and directed in order to assure that the aggressiveness is applied where and when necessary, while at the same time demonstrating the forbearance to give the ARVN their share, or more than their share, of credit.

e. Assignment policies regarding MACV advisors.

I cannot stress enough the importance of assigning highly motivated personnel of the highest quality as advisors. Especially needed at small unit level are personnel with a logistics background. It is


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essential that the logistical systems of ARVN, province and district levels, be exercised and that the unit has the equipment and supplies required. The problem today is not so much advising on tactics, but that of staff procedures, coordination and logistics. It is also especially important that every advisor understand that there must be concern for the individual and that in many respects this war cannot be won unless it is based on courtesy and respect for the thoughts, religion, and philosophy of the people whose country this is.

Our goal in XXIV Corps has been to work ourselves out of a job. I am convinced that the secret of our success thus far is not techniques, procedures, organizational charts or command relationships. The truth of the matter is that one can trace the success achieved in this area to human relationships and attitudes. There must be concern for the individual, publicly and privately, or we are little better than the enemy we seek to destroy. It is true that part of our mission is to defeat the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong, but it is also to show the Vietnamese National our sincere desire to secure his surroundings and prove that we are genuinely interested in his welfare and future.



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